



The Syrian Democratic Council

The Syrian Democratic Council (SDC) is a confederation of multi-ethnic political parties, associations, civil society organizations and local activists in Syria calling for democracy, religious freedom, individual rights and the empowerment of women in the country. The SDC was established in 2015 as a leading political organization in Syria. Its leadership is linked to the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which liberated most of northern Syria of the Islamic State in partnership with the United States and the Global Coalition to defeat ISIS.



On the frontlines, SDC security forces, the SDF, have been a key ally of the United States fighting ISIS

In 2014, the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES), an authority governing about one-third of Syrian territory and more than four million people, was established. The AANES provides daily services to millions of Syrians including education; electricity; water; sanitation, and security in the North and East region of Syria. For its part, the SDF continues to serve as an internationally recognized counter-terrorism force against Islamic extremist organizations, and provides support and protection to U.S. military forces and American diplomats stationed in Syria.



SDC officials regularly meet with United States Government officials. SDC leaders pictured above with US senators in Washington, DC in fall 2019





The United States has allied itself with the SDF and the SDC in the global war on terrorism. The SDC views the US as a key ally in safeguarding democracy and ensuring peace and security in the North and East region of Syria. Critically, American and Western diplomats, and leading international NGOs work freely in the region governed by the AANES.

The SDC seeks support from the United States Government in a number of concrete ways, which it believes also serves the US national interest:

- Provide development and humanitarian aid to the population in the North and East region of Syria in partnership with and support of the AANES and local councils.
- Assist SDC to build the capacity of the AANES institutions by providing technical assistance and training in government; administration; public policy and civil services.
- Provide the SDF with equipment and supplies to ensure the security of the North and East region of Syria and its inhabitants.
- Train SDF counter-terrorism units and AANES' regional law enforcement personnel to ensure that ISIS or other Islamic extremists do not gain territory in North and East Syria as it has in the past to the detriment of US national security interests.
- Call on the United States to ensure that foreign military or militia forces do not destabilize the country's North and East region, provide any material or financial support to Islamic extremist groups in the area or challenge Syria's sovereignty.
- Help secure a seat for the SDC and the AANES at the table in peace talks with the Government of Syria, rebel groups and/or regional actors.
- Call on Turkey's military forces to leave the SDC-administered North and East region, including from Sere Kaniye (Ras al-Ayn), Gire Spi (Tal Abyad), as well as the region of Afrin and exit Syria.
- Sanction the Turkish military if its forces do not leave the North and East region of Syria by a date certain agreed to by the concerned parties. The Turkish military's invasion of the AANES-administered region in October 2019 caused death, displacement and destruction in the region.

SDC's Leadership

The SDC leadership consists of two Co-Chairs: Amina Omar, a Syrian Kurd and Riad Darar, an Arab tribal leader, author, and former political prisoner.

Democracy, Decentralization, and Local Councils

The SDC envisions decentralization in North and East Syria and the empowerment of local authorities and communities in the region. The SDC also believes that decentralization should be a model for other parts of Syria, embodied in a new national constitution, and it fully supports a political solution in Syria that delivers peace and security for its citizens and inhabitants.





The SDC has implemented a governance structure that embodies the true spirit of democracy or rule by the people. Seven local administrations or councils working in cities, towns and villages across the North and East region of Syria, manage the region's administrative functions and public services, including health; education; housing, and social and economic integration. The SDF provides the North and East region's public security, and it is accountable to both the AANES and local councils, which represent the citizens of the region.



The SDC constitution guarantees religious freedom. Thousands in the SDC region have converted to Christianity, and new churches have been licensed

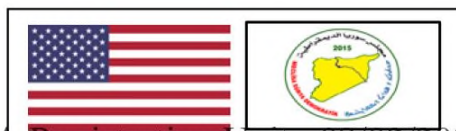
Diversity and Religious Freedom

The SDC has worked to protect ethnic and religious freedoms and plurality in the North and East region since its establishment. The region is home to Arabs, Kurds, Assyrian and Chaldean Christians, Turkmen and Armenians. The AANES constitution protects the rights of all to believe and worship as they wish, and mandates that each political position in the regional government; local councils and villages be held by individuals from two distinct cultural and/or religious backgrounds. The constitution guarantees full rights to minority groups and protects them from persecution. The SDC and the AANES councils actively seek roles for minority group leaders and guidance and participation from them.

There is more religious diversity in the AANES-administered region than anywhere else in the Middle East. Unique to the Middle East, the SDC envisions a Syria in which all in the country are treated equally and fairly regardless of ethnicity, religion or identity.

Empowerment of Women

Full gender equality is a principle at the heart of the SDC platform, and women make up about half of all SDC and AANES government positions. The women's military units of the SDF (known as the "YPJ," or Kurdish women fighters) played an instrumental role in defeating the Islamic State.





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